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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3875

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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM IN

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT COULD ADJOURN EARLY

REF: A. NEW DELHI 2746

1B. NEW DELHI 2745

1C. NEW DELHI 2714

11. (SBU) There are increasing signs that the Parliamentary session which began on October 17 and was scheduled to run through November 21, will be adjourned early, perhaps as soon as October 24, and reconvened at a later date. Finance Secretary Ashok Chawla told Acting DCM on October 22 that the GOI has (or will shortly) issue a notification to that effect. While the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats told us that no such notification has been issued as yet, this does not mean one is not in the works. Shekhar Iyer of the Hindustan Times told PolOff that the United Progressive Alliance government and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have agreed to adjourn on October 24 provided two pieces of pending financial legislation are passed by then. A railways appropriation bill passed both houses today. The GOI is trying to get a Supplementary Demand for Grants bill pertaining to the budget through Parliament tomorrow. This will allow the Parliament to adjourn on October 24.

12. (SBU) The push to a shorter session of Parliament came after the Election Commission announced state assembly elections between November 14 and December 24 in six states -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Jammu and Kashmir (reflets). Political parties with stakes in these states want their leaders to return from Delhi to campaign in the field. These state elections are seen as crucial to the fortunes of the political parties because they will set the tone for the national elections, due before May 2009. The betting is that if Parliament adjourns this week, it will reconvene shortly after December 8, by which time five of the six states will be done. At that point the only state where assembly elections would still be pending will be Jammu and Kashmir, a small state with only four Members of Parliament and, hence, of limited importance in cobbling together coalitions in Delhi.

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